



## The Dr. Horacio E. Oduber Hospital unveils a newly renovated Rehabilitation Department

December 7 was the official opening of a new exercise room, which is a sub section of the physiotherapy program for the expanding Rehabilitation Department. Staff of the Rehabilitation Department, headed Aixa Arana-de Veer, social worker, and Doctor Kyle Bennett, chief psychiatrist, hosted a tour of the newly renovated facility for press members the day before.

The John de la Fuente Exercise Room was dedicated to the man who actually began the first physiotherapy and rehabilitation department in Aruba at the San Pedro de Verona Hospital in Oranjestad in 1974. Now living in Holland, Mr. de la Fuente was unable to attend the ceremony, as he is a victim of diabetes, which forced him to return to Holland many years ago. He was represented in Aruba by his son Ramon, accepting this great honor on behalf of his father, who now makes use of such a facility after losing his leg to diabetes. Ramon expressed that his father is well acquainted with the need for a rehabilitation facility from both "the attitude of a physiotherapist and a patient."

When John de la Fuente began working at the old hospital the facility consisted of a room the was approximately fifteen by fifteen feet square. Since then the physical dimensions and the staff have grown to as modern and equipped a facility as can be found in Holland or the United States. A staff of thirteen, including five physiotherapists, an occupational therapist, a speech therapist, a social worker and assistant, a fully qualified psychiatrist specializing in rehabilitation, and orthopedic therapist, department head and secretary, make up the "Rehabilitation Team."

Recent renovations to the department exceed 100,000 florins, according to Aixa Arana-de Veer, part of many major upgrades that have been made to the Dr. Horacio E. Oduber Hospital this year. In 2005 the Rehabilitation Department handled of 17, 629 cases, of which 15,931 were cases directly related to their function, and the balance involving other health disciplines. The Rehabilitation Department works with stroke victims, multi-trauma accident victims, and those losing limbs to diseases such as diabetes, or have been debilitated by such diseases as Parkinson's. Marlon Thoede, a member of the staff is a specialist in lymph triage, and the various staff are certified members of either Dutch qualifying organizations, or from the U.S., such as the National Association of Social Workers.

The staff of the newly renovated Rehabilitation Department is very proud of their "state of the art" facility. They are devoted to the job of "providing the means for the injured, the handicapped, and children born with birth or genetic defects to learn to cope and live productive lives," stated Dr. Kyle Bennett in describing the changes and goals of the department.